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State INR Morning Summary - 

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH - ANALYSIS: JUNE 23, 1980

1. IRAN: BANISADR ATTEMPTS TO ASSERT MORE CONTROL OVER THE SECURITY FORCES

President Bani-Sadr is attempting to gain better control over the Revolutionary Guard and the regular military to strengthen his hand in his confrontation with the clerics. These efforts will provoke clerical opposition and we expect an early countermove to block a significant increase in Bani-Sadr's authority. Neither side is likely to prevail over the other in the short-run.

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Within the last few days Bani-Sadr has:

- replaced the commanders of the three services and the Joint Staff; and
- turned down the resignation of the recently appointed Revolutionary Guard commander, Abu Sharif.

This is at least the fourth change of command for each of the services as well as for the Joint Staff since early 1979. While the changes probably help assure the loyalty of the services to Bani-Sadr, the personalities of the new appointee do not seem likely to help an already demoralized and leaderless force. The changes all but assure that the armed forces will not be able to influence current political events in a major way for a long time to come.

Bani-Sadr's insistence on keeping his appointee in charge of the Revolutionary Guard demonstrates his determination to assert more direct control over that body. The Guard was formed from the armed mobs that were active in January-February 1979 and has since become an integral part of the revolutionary apparatus which includes also the Revolutionary Council, Revolutionary Courts and related bodies. Formal governmental control of the Revolutionary Guard could significantly undermine the strength and influence of the clerically run parallel government. For example, the Guard has been largely responsible for enforcing the edicts and directives of the Revolutionary Court system and has provided security services for the Embassy occupiers.

As in everything else, Khomeini's support will be of crucial importance for the success of Bani-Sadr's campaign. But Khomeini, who is a master at giving mixed signals, may be withholding what Bani-Sadr needs. His decision earlier this week to appoint a personal representative to oversee the activities of the Guard and report directly to him is not a step which can be viewed as strengthening Bani-Sadr's hand.

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State Department review completed